

Call on IOC to reconsider rejection of minute of silence at opening ceremonies

This summer marks 40th anniversary of tragedy in which 11 Israelis were killed

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, Reps. Richard Hanna (R-Barneveld), Steve Israel (D-Huntington), Nita Lowey (D-Harrison) and Eliot Engel (D-Bronx)

held a minute of silence to honor the victims of the 1972 Munich Massacre. They also called on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to reconsider its rejection of recent requests to hold a minute of silence during the opening ceremonies of this year's Olympic Games, which will take place tomorrow. Seventeen bipartisan Members of Congress participated in the minute of silence, including

Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Ranking Member Howard Berman

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Rep. Hanna said, "The International Olympics Committee refuses to honor these victims during London's Opening Ceremony, but we will today. We remember: David Berger, Ze'ev Friedman, Yossef Gutfreund, Eliezer Halfin, Yossef Romano, Amitzur Shapira, Kehat Shorr, Mark Slavin, Andre Spitzer, Yakov Springer, and Moshe Weinberg. A life can never be repaid, but it can be honored and we will never forget."

Rep. Israel said, "By rejecting multiple requests to hold a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the 1972 Munich Massacre, the IOC has blatantly disregarded the very ideals on which the Olympics are predicated—international friendship and fraternity. I am hopeful that the IOC will reconsider its decision before tomorrow's opening ceremony, but in the meantime, I am standing with my colleagues today to give the 11 Israeli lives that were lost the moment of remembrance they deserve."

Rep. Lowey said, "The Olympics are meant to represent fraternity and healthy competition. Every two years, nations join together to celebrate the achievements of athletes internationally. Honoring the Munich 11 would show the world that every Olympian is part of a family, one that is stronger than prejudice and acts of hatred."

Rep. Engel said, "The IOC has a chance to honor the memories of their fallen heroes and mark the 40th anniversary of the murder of 11 Israeli athletes and coaches. This is not a political issue, but a matter of human decency. The Munich 11 were part of the Olympic family, and IOC's rejection thus far of a minute of silence is unacceptable. If this were any other nation but Israel there would have been a moment of silence a long time ago. We should be talking about the Olympic Games this weekend, instead we have the IOC playing political games."

In May, Reps. Hanna, Israel and 21 other Members of Congress sent a bipartisan letter to Dr. Jacques Rogge, president of the IOC, calling on the committee to reconsider its rejection of requests to hold a moment of silence during the opening ceremonies of this year's Olympic Games. Their request was not met.

At the same time, Reps. Lowey and Engel introduced a resolution in the House calling for a minute of silence to give the 11 Israeli athletes and coaches the recognition they deserve 40 years after the Munich massacre.